



Australian Government
National Recovery and Resilience Agency



North West Implementation Working Group

Meeting 4, Wednesday 8 September 2021

Karumba, QLD



Fourth Meeting of the North West Implementation Working Group

On Wednesday 8 September 2021 the North West Implementation Working Group (IWG) met in Karumba to discuss the region's future funding priorities, mental health and wellbeing issues, and barriers to addressing connectivity, liveability and housing. Travel restrictions for some of the members did not diminish the group's ability to tackle the ambitious agenda.



Outcomes of the discussion

The Coordinator-General of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (the Agency), the Hon Shane L Stone QC AC, gave an overview of the expanded role of the new Agency and its focus on national recovery and resilience. The Coordinator-General discussed some of the issues that continue to persist in the region, and assured members that the Agency remains committed to supporting the communities most-affected by the 2019 Monsoon Trough to recover.

Deputy Chair and North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Executive Officer, Mr Greg Hoffman, provided the group with an overview of the [Western Queensland Alliance of Councils Housing Solutions Study](#) prepared by the Regional Australia Institute (RAI). A general lack of adequate housing and its flow on effects to a community's capacity to build resilience is a key challenge for the region. The report identified over 500 jobs were advertised in regional Queensland (not including the South West), the shortfall in housing across the region is 1,480 dwellings (as at June 2021). The report also identified that council-supplied housing needs to increase by 296 dwellings, and 248 council-owned dwellings are in need of major refurbishment.

The Western Queensland Primary Health Network shared their knowledge and experience from organising flood recovery and resilience summits, including a summary of the key outcomes from the 2020 summit. The group highlighted the importance of events to support mental health, noting they are most successful when mental health outreach is subtly integrated within the event. Events that promote a connected community will in-turn promote a resilient community. The group further raised the importance of stability in terms of mental health support services and the need for long term support to communities. The report, [Our Stories: Beyond the Disaster 2021](#) shares local experiences and champions inspiration for hope, recovery and resilience. The group noted the importance of recording historic events and celebrating the region's recovery. Also noted was the difficulty many communities face in talking about these tragic events, highlighting how raw the 2019 flood event still is for the region.

The Coordinator-General thanked outgoing community working group members Susan Dowling and Carly Cox for their contributions to the IWG over the last 12 months.

Get to know more about the IWGs at: recovery.gov.au/north-queensland-flood-recovery then select 'Implementation Working Groups'.

Focus on Kurumba, Carpentaria Shire

In February 2019, an estimated 500,000 head of livestock were lost in the catastrophic monsoon event across north Queensland, including 80,000 cattle across the Carpentaria Shire. The flood waters rose quickly and significantly, destroying infrastructure, farm machinery, equipment, domestic dams, livestock handling facilities, sheds and homes. The flow-on effects to local businesses, communities, economies and the environment were, and remain, significant.



The Australian Government continues to provide a hand up to farmers, businesses and communities affected by the 2019 North Queensland floods, with \$300 million in grants available to support primary producers restock, replant and rebuild and for locally-led projects that support North Queensland's recovery.

To date, Carpentaria Shire has received over \$6.3 million in approved grant funding to support their recovery from the 2019 flood event. Examples of some of the grants in Carpentaria Shire are detailed below.

Recovery and Resilience Grants Stream 1

- \$87,000 to install an automatic weather station at Karumba Airport to provide information to Council and other organisations for disaster preparedness.
- \$180,000 to install an on-site chlorine generator for Karumba reservoirs to store the vastly safer salt alternative and in large quantities, reducing transport costs of hazardous chemicals.
- \$150,000 towards the Normanton Water Treatment Plant Pipework Upgrades, to re-route the pipe system and pump treated water into the Normanton Water Tower and provide gravity feed to the network rather than pumped supply.
- \$40,000 towards the Normanton Water Treatment Plant Storage Upgrades, to develop a study for reusing and/or increasing the existing capacity of the decommissioned water storage reservoirs located at the Normanton Water Treatment Plant.
- \$80,000 towards investigation into a new Karumba sewerage system, to scope and plan for Karumba sewerage system, including recommendation of treatment options.



- \$320,000 towards the Glenore Weir intake, pipework and valve set upgrades, to upgrade the emergency intake for Glenore Weir during flooding and upgrades to pipework and valve sets.

Telecommunications and Energy Improvement

- \$173,937 to Telstra to install a new mobile small cell at Karumba North.
- \$786,867 to Telstra to build a new mobile base station to further extend coverage across the northern parts of the flood basin, including both the Norman and Flinders Rivers.
- \$683,747 to Telstra to build a new mobile base station to further extend Telstra mobile coverage east from Normanton.
- \$1,000,000 to Wi-Sky Queensland towards their telecommunications project, the scope of which is the upgrading and construction of 17 telecommunications towers along the 453 kilometre corridor between Cloncurry and Normanton/Karumba. The project will also enable farmers and graziers located along the corridor to implement 'Internet of Things' (IOT) devices into their businesses by providing a free LoRaWAN network.

Managing Disaster Risk Grants

- \$218,882 towards the Normanton Stormwater upgrades.
- \$500,000 towards the Karumba Point Shoreline Protection and Revitalisation Project.

Further information on the grants outlined above can be found at: recovery.gov.au/2019-north-queensland-flood-support



Next meeting

The group will next meet in Burketown before the end of the year.